THE PRATER.

By NICHOLAS BABBLE, Esq;

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—— let Good-Nature o'er our Mirth preſide,
Divert not check, without impelling guide.
Allur'd by this the gath'ring frown unbends,
The Laugh grows general, and ev'n Wits are Friends.
Touch'd with this trickling balm, fair Virtue wakes,
And gen'rous Satire heals the Wound it makes.

W. WHITEHEAD.

I WAS laſt Night amuſing myſelf with *Arioſto*'s Account of *Aſtolfo*'s Journey to the Moon; where he ſuppoſes every thing loſt on Earth to be treaſured up. This whimſical Account, which, however, I think is far the moſt entertaining part of the *Orlando Furioſo*, made ſuch an

impreſſion on my mind, that ſoon after I went to bed, I fell into the following Dream.

I was, methought, whirled up, on a ſudden, to the Moon, with a prodigious rapidity, and ſet on my feet before a ſtupendous Building, near which were aſſembled a great multitude of People of both Sexes, who had been uſher'd in by a Porter, attending, for that purpoſe, at the Gate of it. I advanced among the reſt, and aſked him to whom ſo vaſt an Edifice belonged. "This "Edifice, ſaid he, is a Public Repoſitory for every thing "that is loſt on Earth, which immediately aſcends, and "is carefully preſerved in it. But the Collection of ſuch "Commodities has been of late ſo very much enlarged, "that a Proclamation is going to be iſſued, in order to "invite the Owners of them to make their appearance, "who are to receive what they have loſt, provided they "can lay a good claim to it."—This Anſwer very much excited my Curioſity: and I intreated the communicative Porter to let me be preſent on ſo intereſting an occaſion; adding, that I had myſelf met with a great many loſſes in my time, which I might now perhaps, by good luck, recover. — Before I could receive a reply, the Doors of the Building were thrown open. A Herald appear'd with a ſpeaking Trumpet, and made through it the following Proclamation: "All you on Earth be-"low, whoſe loſſes have aſcended, and have been trea-"ſured up in our Repoſitory, hear and attend. This "Day is appointed for you to come and demand them." After he had repeated this Speech three times very diſtinctly, a prodigious thick Vapour roſe from the Ground, and I immediately heard a rattling noiſe, like the cackling of Geeſe, only fifty times louder, which, as it approached to my Ears, almoſt ſtunned them: this Noiſe proceeded from what I at firſt took for a Fog, but I ſoon found it came from the Inhabitants of the Earth flying up in flocks to recover their loſſes.

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When they arrived at the Door of the Repoſitory, ſuch crowds of them ruſhed in with ſo much eagerneſs, that I could not without the greateſt difficulty make my way after them. At laſt, however, the Porter, ſeeing my perplexity, good-naturedly admitted me, through his own Lodge, into the *Great Room*, in which the Crowds I had obſerved without, were running up and down with a wildneſs in their looks, and demanding with impetuoſity the things they came in queſt of. As there was, for ſome minutes, no body to anſwer their interrogatories, they ſeemed to be in the utmoſt confuſion. An inner Door, at length, opened. — A majeſtic Perſonage, in a flowing Robe, appeared: By the Enſigns ſhe bore, I knew her to be JUSTICE. She was attended by two Figures; one of them I ſoon diſcover'd to be TRUTH, and the other IMPARTIALITY: the former was dreſs'd in a ſnowy Veſtment, and waved a Mirror in her Hands: the latter ſtood with a compoſed air, and neither turned her Eyes to the right nor the left. I was told by the Porter, that it was the buſineſs of IMPARTIALITY to deliver things to the right Owners of them, after they had been ſhewn to JUSTICE by TRUTH. The Porter then ordered the Crowd to diſperſe, and IMPARTIALITY aſked the Perſon who happened to be neareſt to her, and who was a Man about threeſcore, what his Name was, and what he had loſt? —What I have been ſearching for all my life, replied he, *a Place at Court*. I am called Sir *Vanity Idle*. *Impartiality* then turned to *Truth*, who gave her a caſket with this Gentleman's name, over which was written in capital letters TIME, which was all they could find with *his* Mark, and *Truth* declared, he never had any thing elſe to loſe. This provoked him ſo much, that he left the place in a paſſion. The next was a middle-aged Man, of ſome eminence in the Law, who came to recover a Cauſe he had loſt for his Client, by which his ſaid Client was to have got 500 *l.* and his own Bill would have

have come to twice that ſum. *Juſtice* looked at him ſternly, and *Truth* delivered to him a ſmall pacquet marked HONESTY, which he rejected with the utmoſt contempt, ſaying, he had never been poſſeſs'd of it. A long lean figure, then ſqueezed through the Crowd in a thread-bare Suit of Black, tattered Linnen, and an old Tye-Wig, (with not a crooked hair in it) which he ſhook off in attempting to reach *Impartiality*, demanded with ſome vehemence his Patron's favour, having, as he ſuppoſed, loſt it, as he did not ſupport his laſt Tragedy, but ſuffer'd it to be damn'd. *Impartiality* gave him a very ſmall Box, with REASON wrote upon it, and told him, he was miſtaken about his Patron, who was the firſt to cry down his performance; but that the Box contained what he had loſt many years ago. The Bard ſeized it eagerly, but in going out, dropped it, and the crowd was ſo preſſing, he could not find it again: one of the Company, pitying his rueful figure, picked up his Wig, and toſſed it to him; and he marched off in a hurry with the hind part of it before, to the no ſmall diverſion of all the By-ſtanders. A great noiſe, occaſioned by a multitude of female Voices then alarmed me, each contending who ſhould ſpeak firſt, but as no one would give her Neighbour the preference, they all opened at once. *Juſtice* interrupted them, and ordered that only one ſhould ſpeak at a time. — Mrs. *Flurry*, with great vehemence, demanded her Temper, which was readily reſtored to her in a fine China Jar; but, as ſhe was carrying it off, ſhe was unfortunately joſtled, and letting it fall out of her Hands, loſt her Temper, for the Jar was broken. — Miſs *Never-bluſh* aſk'd for her Modeſty, and other feminine qualities, but was laughed out of them before ſhe got down to Earth. — Lady *Dye Lovebloom* came to look for her Beauty, and a charming figure ſhe made when it was reſtored to her, but ſhe thought herſelf ſo pale when compared with thoſe who were covered with *Rouge*, that ſhe ſoon loſt it again. — Miſs *Lofty* aſked for her *Humility*,

mility, which being deliver'd to her in a plain caſe without any ornament, the ſight of it ſo much diſguſted her, that ſhe flung it away. — Mrs. *Languiſh* deſired her *Health*, which was offer'd to her in a beautiful cryſtal Vial, with a Label, on which theſe Words TEMPERANCE and EXERCISE were written: ſhe bore it off, but was ſo exceſſively fatigued with the weight of it, that every body who ſaw her thought ſhe would ſoon let it drop. — Miſs *Lovejoy* demanded her *Reputation*, but was told that when a Woman had loſt her Reputation, it could never be reſtored. —When this crowd of importunate Ladies was diſmiſſed, a little weaſel-faced old Man, whom I thought I recollected, with much thruſting and many peeviſh ſhrugs, made his way to the Throne of JUSTICE. — My old Friend, who ſaid *Things were not ſo bad thirty years ago.* — TRUTH aſked him what he wanted? he anſwer'd haſtily, and in a fret, my *Quiet*; but IMPARTIALITY ſaid it was a miſtake, and that he had only loſt his *Good Humour*, which ſhe offer'd to him; but he made half a dozen Pſhaws, and turned upon his heel. I then looked ſharp, expecting to ſee many more of my Acquaintance, but the crowd thicken'd ſo much, and there was ſuch a confuſed number of Voices, that I could only make a ſhift to hear, that an eminent Citizen came to look for his *Popularity* when he had loſt his *Integrity*; and a Sea-Officer for the *Favour* of the Miniſtry, when he had loſt his *Courage*. — Night now came on apace. IMPARTIALITY diſperſed the crowd by ordering them, at the command of JUSTICE, to withdraw till next Morning. — I had then leiſure to examine the Repoſitory with attention, and received a great deal of Entertainment, as I met with the names of many of my Acquaintance. There was a huge Jar, which contained *Sam. Olive*'s Conſcience, by which I gueſſed how he had got a *Plumb* by ſelling Pickles; cloſe by it ſtood, in an exceeding ſmall Box, his Wife's Knowledge of the World. There was Lady *Charlotte Whirligig*'s Bluſhes in a little japan'd Patch-Box, and Miſs *Ciddy*'s Reflection in a China Bottle, and near them a large

leaden Pot full of the old *Britiſh* Spirit. There was Sir *Harry Squander*'s conjugal Affection folded up in a Money-Bag, and *Dicky Dyelip*'s Brains in a cambrick Handkerchief. There were the Hearts of half the Women of my Acquaintance, encircled with Gold and Silver Lace, Sword-Knots, Feathers, Cockades, Ribbons and Garters: and near them lay a large Bundle called *Taſte*, with ſeveral Cheſts of Religion, Virtue, Honour, Generoſity, Humanity and Benevolence, with an immenſe quantity of Common-Senſe, which my Intelligencer told me were never called for. I ſaw the names of many People who paſs for Wits and Geniuſſes upon Earth, which would aſtoniſh Mankind were they publiſhed; but I don't think myſelf at liberty to make ſuch Diſcoveries, nor am I inclined to prejudice ſo many People in the opinion of the World. There were alſo the Characters of a multitude of Females twiſted up in Libels and Lampoons, and the diſcretion of half the World. — While I was peeping about, I happened to ſtumble upon a neat Box with theſe Words, in very large Characters, *The entire Wit and Humour of* NICHOLAS BABBLE, *Eſq*; I was ſo much confounded at the ſight of theſe Words, not being in the leaſt conſcious of having loſt thoſe choice commodities, that I waked in a great fright, and whether I ſhall ever be again the Man I have been, I cannot poſſibly determine.

FINIS.

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